Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Issue 596

Jagannath Smashes the Pride of Charchika

www.gopaljiu.org

तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita
Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 596 | *Śrī Varūthinī Ekādaśī* | 24 April 2025

Highlights

• Artificial Humility
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
• The True Meaning of Trnad Api Sunicena
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada
• True Humility
Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode
• Be Simple
Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja
• Goddess Charchika and Jagannath

Unkown artist. Punjab Hills, c. early 1700s.

Artificial Humility

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Renunciation Through Wisdom is a collection of essays originally written in Bengali and published by Srila Prabhupada in India during the 1940s. It was translated into English and published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in 1992.

tṛnād api sunīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly. [*Cc. ādi* 17.31]

Often people do not understand the transcendental message of this verse. Although they are forced to act by the influence of the three modes, they make an artificial show of humility, pretending to be weak, lowly, and penniless beggars. This sort of cheating mood is most undesirable.

— *Renunciation Through Wisdom* 5.1. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 1992.

Unkown photographer.

Cover: *Jagannath and Goddess Charchika in Puri*. Jagannath by an unknown photographer. Charchika photo by Madhavananda Das.

Painting by Kartick Biswas. West Bengal school. Circa 1920s.

Nimai Pandit worships the feet of his teacher Gangadas Pandit

The True Meaning of Trnad Api Sunicena

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

To his disciples gathered for his Vyāsa-pūjā *in 1933, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta expressed his personal humility:*

At times the thought strikes me that all persons are serving Hari, only I myself am left out. At other times I wonder whether the world abounds with extremely cruel persons who refuse to employ me in the service of Hari by noticing my weakness. Perchance there be many persons for tending my diseased body and mind. But there are very few persons who are prepared to help me in serving Hari. Fifty-nine years of my life have passed away. Numberless persons have blessed me, desiring that I may live my full sixty summers in this world. But I have not been able to serve Hari. If I would have served Hari many persons of this world would have been in a position to reciprocate and might have thereby helped me to be happy. I have failed to be humbler than the blade of grass and more forbearing than the tree. I am not able to chant the name of Hari twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four. I have wasted a good deal of time for resting myself. I often try to practice the service of Hari, but in lieu of the service of Hari the active desire for enjoyment of the things of this world engross me. I am busied with the thought that the world is missing the service of Hari. But I have no attention to devote to the fact that I myself have missed altogether the service of Hari.

... The transcendental conception of thinking "I am dust at the lotus feet of my spiritual master; I am the servant of guru and Krishna" is what is meant by *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* (becoming lower than grass). *Jīve dayā* (compassion toward all living entities), *nāme ruci* (taste for the holy names), and *vaiṣṇava-sevā* – these are Mahaprabhu's three teachings. The meaning of *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* is not disingenuousness, merely flaunting a show of humility; it means actual eligibility for *kīrtana* by *nāme ruci* and considering oneself a servant of the holy name. Service is the gateway to *ruci* for the name; service to guru and *vaiṣṇavas* is *tṛṇād api sunīcatā*. We should not become subordinate (*nīcatā*) to nondevotees, but to devotees, from whom we should beg mercy and show respect. The *mahājanas* instructed us not to display humility before everyone. To show humility toward envious

Unknown artist. Kangra or Garhwal. Circa 1810-1820.

Lord Balaram fights Jarasandha

atheists is not *vaiṣṇava-sevā* or *tṛṇād api sunīcatā*. If we transgress this instruction we will never become qualified to chant the holy name or attain *ruci* for the name; rather, our actions will result in becoming envious of others. *Rāma-bhakta* Hanuman's burning of Lanka is real *tṛṇād api sunīcatā*.

—*Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* 3.3.12. Compiled and written by Bhakti Vikasa Swami. Bhakti Vikasa Trust. Surat, India. 2009.

True Humility

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

A *vaiṣṇava's* humility cannot be doubted or challenged if he preaches the glories of the holy name and writes books, as long as he strictly adheres to the instructions of his guru. One who tries to cheat and deceive others, by making a show of humility although he lacks it just to gain cheap adoration is not truly humble.

— *Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam* commentary on *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse 3. Translation by Sarvabhavana Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. India. 1999.

Be Simple

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

If you are simple at heart, if you have a clean heart, then everything is okay. This is the essential problem — we are not simple. We are critical now, there is no simplicity at all. If some simplicity was there before, now it is gone. Many say, "If we become simple, people will cheat us, because simple people are cheated." But you will not be cheated. Have firm faith in Krishna. Have faith in Mahaprabhu. Be simple. They will take care of you. You will never be cheated if you completely take shelter at their lotus feet. That is their responsibility. When you put the responsibility on yourself instead of them, then it is more likely you will be cheated. That's the mistake with you, in most of you.

Unknown artist. Gita Press. Gorakhpur

Vibhishan comes to surrender to Lord Ramachandra

Be a simple, true *vaiṣṇava* with no crookedness. You are always thinking yourself very intelligent, very expert. You have so many persons guarding you, "Oh, no one can cheat me!" You are trying to protect yourself. How can you protect yourself unless Krishna wants it?

— Excerpted from chapter 8 of *Pariprasna the Process of Inquiry*. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar. 2020. From a discussion in Sydney, Australia, 7 November 1990.)

Causes and Symptoms Of Humility

Srila Rupa Goswami's
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu *2.4.21*

atha dainyam –
duḥkha-trāsāparādhādyair anaurjityaṁ tu dīnatā

[Describing *dainya*:] Thinking oneself a low creature because of sorrow, fear or offense is called *dainyam* or *dīnatā*.

— Rupa Goswami. *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. With commentaries of Jiva Goswami, and Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur. English translation by Bhanu Svami. Sri Vaikuntha Enterprises. Chennai. 2006.

Goddess Charchika and Lord Jagannath

The Rich Devotional Tradition of Jagannath Puri

Just as the *devatās* appear in *Tretā-yuga* as monkeys to assist Lord Ramachandra, and in *Dvāpara-yuga* as associates of Krishna in Dwarka, similarly, when the Lord manifests his eternal abode of Puri, the *devatās* come to render service to him. One such divine personality is Goddess Charchika.

She has a small temple on Grand Road, next to the Jagannath Temple office. Every year, just before beginning their service of constructing the *Ratha-yātrā* chariots, the carpenters first worship Charchika Devi.

Pahuḍā-sevā and the *Maṇimā Ḍāka*

The final daily ceremony in the Sri Mandir of Puri is known as *pahuḍā-sevā*, when the deities are put to rest for the night. At this time, small golden forms of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra — known as *śayana-vigrahas* (sleeping forms) — are laid on beds sprinkled with flower petals.

Unknown photographer

The *Adhara-pāna* Drink

After returning to the Sri Mandir following the Ratha-yātrā, *Lord Jagannath initially stays on his chariot and wears a golden dress known as* sunā-veśa. *Following that dress he enjoys a cooling lassi drink in gigantic clay pots known as* adhara-pāna. Adhara *means "lips" and* pāna *means "beverage". Consisting of bananas, milk, curd, ghee, sugar, cardamom, black pepper, cloves, nutmeg, edible camphor, peppermint, and tulasi —* adhara-pāna *is a thick drink meant to refresh their lordships after their long hot journey. However, the* adhara-pāna *is not only meant for Jagannath. After offering it to him it is offered to the various spirits,* devas *and* devīs, *such as Charchika Devi who accompanied the chariots as guardians during the* Ratha-yātrā. *The* prasāda adhara-pāna *is offered to satisfy them before they return to their respective abodes. The day after offering the* adhara-pāna, *in a ceremony known as,* nīlādri-vijaya, *Lord Jagannath returns inside of the Sri mandir.*

Unknown photoigrapher

Lord Jagannath on his chariot in Puri

During this intimate *sevā*, the servitors recite the final verse of the day, a sweet invocation called the *Maṇimā Ḍāka*, to lovingly invite the Lord to rest:

mahodaya
rājādhi-rājarājeśvara
īśvara ṭhākura, maṇimā
ananta-koṭi brahmāṇḍa
īśvara ṭhākura, maṇimā
caturdaśa bhuvana
īśvara ṭhākura, maṇimā

"O Lord Jagannath!
You are the king of kings.
You are the master of infinite millions of universes.
You are the controller of all realms of existence."

After these prayers, the *sevayats* depart, leaving the temple in silence. It is believed that around midnight, the *devas* and *devīs* come invisibly to have special darshan of the Lord.

The *Mādaḷā Pāñjī* Account of Charchika Devi

The *Mādaḷā Pāñjī* (literally, "drum chronicle"), the historical record of Jagannath's worship, contains a remarkable story from the year 1386 CE. One evening, Goddess Charchika, who resides in the village of Banki near Cuttack, arrived late for the night worship.

Kirtana and Humility

Srila Jiva Goswami's
Bhakti-sandarbha anuccheda *270*

iyaṁ ca kīrtanākhyā bhaktir bhagavato dravya-jāti-guṇa-kriyābhir dīna-janaika-viṣayāpāra-karuṇā-mayīti śruti-purāṇādi-viśrutiḥ | kalau ca dīnatvaṁ, yathā brahma-vaivarte

This devotion to the Lord in the form of *kīrtana* is unlimitedly merciful to devotees who are humble and devoid of the pride associated with wealth, prestigious birth, admirable qualifications and praiseworthy accomplishments. This is understood from the Vedas and the *Purāṇas*. Humility is natural in *kali-yuga* [because people generally lack the qualifications possesed by those in previous ages].

— Translation by Satya Narayan Das. Jiva Institute. Vrindavan. 2006.

Unknown photoigrapher

The ancient temple of Charchika in Banki

Lord Jagannath forgave her, but Lord Baladev became angry. He chastised her, "You have become proud of your power and position! Do you think you can arrive at your own convenience? Leave!"

Charchika, stung by His words, retorted harshly, "You are the proud one! You wear fine clothes, costly oils, and ornaments. Why are you scolding me over a small mistake? Let me see my Lord!"

Chastisement and Humility: The Goddess Becomes a Servant

Lord Baladev is *guru-tattva.* As the original guru, no one can approach the Lord without his mercy. Angered by her insolence, he banned her from the temple.

Distraught, Charchika spent the night sitting on the temple steps, unable to enter. The next morning, Balaram sent her a message, "A proud *devī* like you cannot enter the temple. If you wish to see Jagannath again, you must learn humility. You must serve as a menial maidservant in the house of the *bhitarcha-mahāpatra* (the priest responsible for putting the Lord to rest each night)."

Accepting his order, Charchika disguised herself in a white widow's sari. She went to the *mahāpatra's* home in the Dolamandapa Sahi area of Puri and told him that Lord Jagannath himself had instructed her to become his servant.

Unknown photoigrapher

Goddess Charchika in Banki

Unknown photographer

Jagannath coming out of the temple surrounded by his devotees in the ceremony known as **pāhaṇḍī.**

Jagannath on the chariot wearing his evening dress known as **baḍa-śṛṅgāra-veṣa**

The priest, whose mother had recently passed away and whose wife was aged, welcomed her into the household. Over time, he grew amazed at her devotion, humility, and expertise, especially in serving the household deities. Yet the neighbors were puzzled — she never went for darshan of Jagannath. When asked, she replied: "Darshan is only possible by the Lord's mercy. If he desires, I will go."

Revelation of the Goddess

One stormy night, when the *bhitarcha-mahāpatra* returned home drenched, she greeted him saying, "I lit a lamp for you, but it just went out."

He was surprised, "How did you light it? It's late, and the neighbors are asleep."

She answered softly, "There is another way." She then revealed her true divine form, stretching out her hand to the lamp atop Jagannath's temple to re-light the lamp in the house.

Her form became cosmic and radiant, larger than the entire city of Puri. The priest fell at her feet in awe.

She explained the reason for her presence in his home, and he promised to petition Lord Jagannath to forgive her. He also begged her to remain in his house so that he and his descendants could continue to worship her.

Reconciliation and Service to Ratha-yātrā

When Charchika returned to the temple the next night, Lord Baladev said, "Now I am pleased with you. One cannot remain a *deva* if they are proud. You have humbly served. You may now enter again."

As a token of her surrender, Balaram granted her a permanent service, "You will become the *devatā* of Nandighosh, Lord Jagannath's chariot. Though his *sevakas* will serve him there, it will be your duty to protect it." In Odisha she is thus revered as a *kṣetra-pālī*, a guardian of the Dham, and the protector of Lord Jagannath's chariot during the *Ratha-yātrā*.

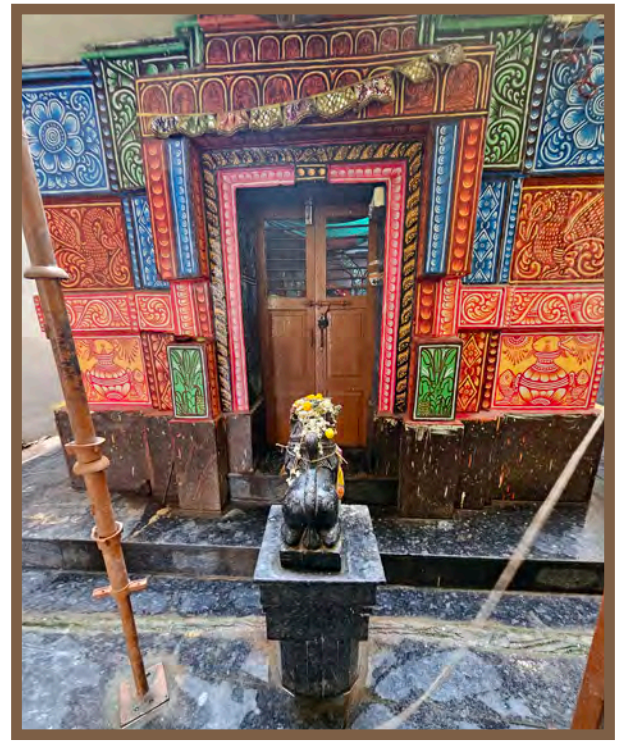

Photo by MDas.

Temple of Charchika Devi in Jagannath Puri

Photo by MDas.

Three goddesses in the Charchika Devi temple in Puri

Temples of Charchika Devi

There are two principal temples of Charchika Devi in relation to Jagannath, one in Banki (near Cuttack) and a second on the Grand Road in Puri — next to the temple office. Local *śāstras* recount that the Banki deity was visited in *Satya-yuga* by Maharaja Indradyumna, when Narada Muni took him in search of the original deity of Nila Madhava.

On the altar of the Puri Charchika temple are three goddesses:

- The central deity is called Charchika.
- On the right is Ugratara.
- The deity on the left is known as Ma Charchika.

Conclusion

This story illustrates that in the practice of *bhakti,* pride must give way to humility in the service of the Lord. It also shows that, *ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya* — Krishna is the only controller, and everyone, including the gods and goddesses — are his servants. In Puri, Jagannath, the Lord of the universe, allows all beings — great and small — to surrender and serve. — MDas

Bibliography

— Parama Karuna Devi and Rahul Acharya. *Puri the Home of Lord Jagannath*. Jagannatha Vallabha Research Center. Puri. 2008.

— Prasanna Kumar Mohapatra. Editor. *Maa Charchika*. Published by Divya Prakashani. Bhubaneswar. 2019.

— Somanath Khuntia. *The Lilas of Lord Jagannatha*. Vedic Cultural Association. USA. 1990.

— Sundarananda Vidyavinode. *Śrī Kṣetra Vaikuntha on Earth*. Touchstone Media. Kolkata. 2017.

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

A free bi-monthly service provided by Gopal Jiu Publications

Gopal Jiu Publications is a section of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada ©Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. All other materials, unless specified, © ISKCON Gopal Jiu Publications. All rights reserved. Blanket permission is given to redistribute Bindu in electronic or print form provided no changes are made to the contents.

Write to us:

bindu@gopaljiu.org

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Subscribe to Bindu:

https://gopaljiu.org/krishna-kathamrta-bindu/